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ABSTRACT

The basic standards for achieving accessibility for the handicapped which are reviewed are of special concern to media center managers seeking to comply with the requirements of Public Law 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A check list for accessibility for the learning resource center or media center is provided, and a bibliography is attached. (CSV)

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IMPACT OF SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND PUBLIC LAW 94-142 ON MEDIA CENTERS

by

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

Presentation for AECT Convention
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"Impact of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Public Law 94-142 on Media Centers"

This presentation will concern itself with basic informational requirements for accessibility for the handicapped, possible equipment changes as well as additional equipment that may be placed in the media center. The figures for accessibility and measurements needed are available from various sources, one of which is Accessibility Standards Illustrated, by Michal Jones, published by the Capital Development Board for the State of Illinois, 1978.

According to the 1970 Census, 11,265,000 Americans are disabled: two out of every 1,000 persons are blind and approximately 13,000,000 Americans are estimated to have some hearing loss in one or both ears.[1]

Aware of the number of persons involved with the handicapped laws, let's turn to these laws themselves. Section 504 of Public Law 93-112, or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, states that "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual . . . shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation, be denied benefits of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance." In other words, anyone receiving federal monies may not discriminate against the handicapped. Public Law 94-142 has as its primary goal to provide free and appropriate educational opportunities for all handicapped children who require special education services. To achieve the appropriate education aspect, each individual covered is to have an individualized written instructional plan designed for his or her special education needs.

In comparing 94-142 and Section 504, sub-part D, both mandate:

a. a free and appropriate education be provided for handicapped persons
b. that handicapped children be educated with nonhandicapped children as much as possible
c. all handicapped children who are not receiving free appropriate public education be identified and located
d. that evaluation procedures be adopted for educational classification and services
e. that procedural safeguards be established[2]

Before dealing with accessibility requirements, let's look at some general information about space and requirements for the handicapped.

A wheelchair's dimensions, depending upon the type of wheelchair, are: 43" to 52" in length and 24" to 29½" in width. A minimum of 6' in width is needed to allow two wheelchairs to pass. A minimum of clearance under a counter, table, or desk is 32" in width and 27½" in height above the floor. An ideal counter height is 29-30". The maximum working reach to be considered is 18" from the edge of the counter. For maneuvering space, the front counter edge to the nearest back obstruction should be at least 4'4" in length. Walking disabilities require a width of 2'7" to 3'0" to maneuver.

A person with an auditory impairment requires special forms of amplification for warning systems that include some type of visual stimulus or other redundant cuing aid.

The visually impaired cannot always detect items that are overhanging, such as display cases or bookcases hung on the wall. Some curing aids may include change in color, change in texture, raised letters, or brailly lettering, to help in identification of areas.

Parking is an accessibility requirement to be considered. It is recommended that specially designed parking stalls be within 100 feet of the accessible building. A head-in or diagonal parking space should be at least 144" wide in comparison to the normal parking space with a width of 96-108". For parallel parking, 48" of clear space should be available beside the car, but not in the traffic lane. In general, parallel parking is more difficult for transfer into chairs for the handicapped person.

Outdoor ramps should not take the place of stairways. There are handicapped persons who cannot negotiate ramps. Ramps useable by persons in wheelchairs are in the range of 1-12 to 1-20 drop ratio, which means that for every one inch of drop it takes 12 feet to absorb the decline, with 1-20 being more desirable.

To allow handicapped persons to get a firm grip on handrails, they should be no larger than 1.5" in diameter, 1.5" from the wall, and extend some distance beyond the first and last step of the staircase.

Doorways should be at least 2'8" wide to accommodate handicapped persons. The door should operate easily with a maximum pressure of resistance of 8 pounds. The door should have a 12" kickplate on the botoom to prevent damage to the door itself or injury to persons who use these doors.

One of the facilities within the building to be considered for accessibility is the restroom. Restrooms should have sufficient width and depth to allow for necessary maneuvering of wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Grab bars within the stalls should be placed approximately 33" off the ground and should be horizontal to the ground, with the same dimensions and space from the wall as handrails. The stall should have the same width as the doorway, a minimum of 32". Its interior area should be no less than 54" across or less than 58" deep, with the door opening outward.

Elevators in the building need to be accessible. To meet space requirements, the elevator must have a minimum of 60"x60" to allow for turning space and contain the following:

1. accessible emergency call system
2. safety edges
3. handrails on three sides (same dimensions as handrails noted above)
4. braille numbers and instructions

To include braille, the newer elevators can be purchased with braille plates built in. Older elevators may be modified by applying brailled labels to the existing metal plate, though these types are more easily vandalized.

Public telephones should have a maximum dial height of 48" and a coin slot height of 54" from the floor. (An additional possibility for telephone accessibility may include adjustable volume for the hearing impaired.)

For the learning resource center or media center, a checklist for accessibility may be devised similar to the following:

CHECKLIST FOR ACCESSIBILITY
MEDIA CENTER/LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

Yes	No		
____	____	1.	Study carrels (32" wide, 30" from floor)
____	____	2.	Aisle between bookshelves (minimum 36" wide)
____	____	3.	A/V equipment accessible (tape/slide, 16mm, etc.)
____	____	4.	Resource material accessible
____	____	5.	Signs identifiable (raised letters, 54-66" from the floor on the wall near entrance)
____	____	6.	Light switches (54" height maximum)
____	____	7.	Doors/entrances (32" minimum)
____	____	8.	Tables (30" clear from floor)
____	____	9.	Entrance accessible

For no answers, what plans need to be made to make accessible?

Within the media center changes may need to be made to accommodate the handicapped. Some of the early study/media carrels were not constructed to accommodate the handicapped. A sample of basic space for a single study carrel built to accommodate the handicapped would be: writing surface of height 30" maximum, bottom of writing surface to floor not less than 27½" (height includes measurement from bars or reinforcements under the surface), and a width of not less than 32". Equipment for preview or practice should be placed on low carts. Instructions for operating equipment will need to be in braille or on audiotape as well as in print. Frequently, carrels that will accommodate the handicapped will not have side panels going completely to the floor. To indicate the presence of the carrels to visually impaired, dowel at .4s or 1½"x1½" boards may be placed on the floor in between the legs of the carrels. In many centers, AC outlets hang from the ceiling and are not acknowledgeable for the visually handicapped. Floor to ceiling columns are available for the ceiling-mounted AC outlets to be plugged into.

Specialized items of equipment for the handicapped could be a valuable addition to the varied assortment of equipment in a media center. Among these specialized

items may be:

1. An Apollo Reader or Visual Tech (basically a television monitor with a side-mounted camera capable of both enlarging materials and reversing the field of black on white to white on black)
2. Talking calculators (since conventional calculators are presently included in many media centers, these specialized talking calculators may prove valuable for those who require them)
3. Speech accelerators (similar to a regular audio tape recorder but have a speed control for increased playback speed without distortion)
4. Braillers
5. Relief maps
6. Braille periodicals

Since anyone receiving federal financial assistance through HEW will have to come to terms with Public Law 93-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the requirements therein, quickly we have reviewed some basic standards that need to be met to achieve such accessibility for the handicapped. Not all regulations were reviewed but some that, as media managers, we must be concerned with.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Jones, Michal A., ARIBA. Accessibility Standards Illustrated. Capital Development Board, State of Illinois, Springfield, IL, June, 1978. (Forward).

[2]Section 504 Compliance Report. Kemp & Young, Inc., Mission, Kansas. Section V, Page 10.

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